

BOOK REVIEW

TIMOTHY A. BLOCK AND ANN FOWLER RHOADS. 2011. **Aquatic Plants of Pennsylvania: A Complete Reference Guide.** (ISBN: 978-0-8122-4306-2, cloth). University of Pennsylvania Press, Hopkins Fulfillment Services, P.O. Box 50370, Hampden Station, Baltimore, Maryland 21211, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.upenn.edu/pennpress, 1-800-537-5487, 1-410-516-6998 fax). \$59.95, 320 pp., 93 color illus., 508 b/w illus., 7" x 10".

Most flower enthusiasts love the plants they know and spend hours tending to their personal gardens and yards. Many spend time helping their local herbarium and surroundings. It's a Labor of Love, and we are more than willing to help in any ways we can. The authors of this volume carefully explain the "Purpose of the Book" in the opening paragraph of the Preface. In very short time, we are in Chapter 1. Evolution and Ecology—and we are totally "hooked." (*Fascination* is probably a more accurate—and scholarly!—designation.) The result is the same. We are definitely intrigued by this book. Your hubby or wife calls to you, asking when dinner will be ready. The engrossed reader responds with "Uh, Honey, there's a big frozen pizza in the 'fridge'—put it in the oven and we'll have that for supper!" (I wonder how many of our readers will immediately identify with that one?!)

While many of us have probably seen a few water lilies and bulrushes and perhaps curly pondweed, most of us are not at all familiar with the plants, their habits, and how they actually grow. In addition to the usual descriptions of the various plants, the authors utilize line drawings, color photographs, and a drawing of the state of Pennsylvania, with a red line indicating the route being examined and a "fill in" of dark blue dots to indicate the presence of lakes. Such maps are also used to show the routes and places in Pennsylvania where specific plants were located.

They also explain the types of ecosystems, the management of aquatic ecosystems (endangered, threatened, rare, undetermined candidate), or watch list by the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (at that time). Table 1.2 lists the Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Aquatic Plants of Pennsylvania. In addition, the authors created a table of Non-native, Invasive Aquatic Plants in Pennsylvania as well as a proliferation of "over-abundant native species."

In Chapter 2, the authors have created Identification Keys for the Aquatic Plants of Pennsylvania. They explain the system they have devised and how to use the keys they have developed. In addition, they include line drawings in areas that might be more difficult to visualize. The keys are designed to be as helpful as possible. The authors really did a great job. These keys may not appear to be the keys you've been accustomed to using, but they do a terrific "either/or" approach which probably works a lot better for this type of identification.

The balance of the volume describes the various types of plants, their family, the species, accompanying line drawings of the plant described, and the map of Pennsylvania showing the route, the locations, and sometimes an accompanying comment.

This volume is fun to peruse, beautiful to see the color photos, easy to use the keys, easy to understand the line drawings, and also creates an urgent desire in the reader to go immediately to Pennsylvania and travel those map routes!—Helen Jeude, Volunteer & Associate Editor, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.